GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
HEALTH AND FAMILY WELFARE
LOK SABHA

UNSTARRED QUESTION NO:1546
ANSWERED ON:22.08.2007
DEAFNESS AMONG CHILDREN
Renge Patil Shri Tukaram Ganpatrao;Singh Deo Smt. Sangeeta Kumari

Will the Minister of HEALTH AND FAMILY WELFARE be pleased to state:

(a) whether more than twenty five thousand children born in the country suffer from deafness;

(b) if so, the details thereof and the reaction of the Government thereto; and

(c) the steps taken by the Government in this regard?

Answer

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF HEALTH & FAMILY WELFARE (SMT. PANABAKA LAKSHMI)

(a) Yes.The figure is based on WHO estimates according to which approximately 1 to 2 per thousand children are born with profound deafness.

(b)&(c) As per existing literature, 50% of the children are deaf due to genetic causes and 40% due to environmental causes (prenatal, perinatal or postnatal).Some of the High Risk Factors are: lack of immunization of the pregnant mother to infectious diseases (such as German measles, chicken pox, etc.); Consanguineous marriages (which increases the risk for having non-syndromic hearing loss); Problems during birth leading to asphyxia to the newborn baby; consuming ototoxic drugs during pregnancy etc.,

Ministry of Health and Family Welfare has already included Measles vaccination in the Universal Immunization programme. Ministry of Health & Family Welfare has also inititated the National Programme of Prevention and Control of Deafness and has launched its pilot phase in 25 districts belonging to 10 states and 1 Union Territory all over the Country. Major thrust is on prevention, early detection and treatment of deafness in children with the ultimate goal to reduce the prevalence of deafness. The programme envisages training and capacity building of Medical Colleges, district hospitals and the PHCs in deafness intervention .The health workers are also proposed to be trained on deafness prevention . In addition, Information Education and Communication strategies are being developed to build awareness in the public and sensitize different level of workers